

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Complete Nom. but
NO Sig.
For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Learner Building

and/or common Learner Building

2. Location

street & number 107-111 E. Sycamore Street N/A not for publication

city, town Kokomo N/A vicinity of

state Indiana code 018 county Howard code 067

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name F. D. Miller Company

street & number 115 1/2 North Buckeye Street

city, town Kokomo, N/A vicinity of state Indiana 46901

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Howard County Recorder

street & number Howard County Courthouse

city, town Kokomo state Indiana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory title has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Department of Natural Resources
Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology

city, town Indianapolis state Indiana

7 Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Learner Building is located just off Main Street in downtown Kokomo. Two stories high, it is a rectangular red brick commercial building with a sloping flat roof. The building faces north and abuts a commercial building on the west and an alley on the east.

The ground level has eleven bays and consists of three storefronts. There are four doorways recessed into the building. The entrances to 107 (the storefront on the west end), and 111 (the storefront on the east end), are recessed farther than the entrances to 109 (the center storefront), and the center door, which is west of 109. 107 has two glass display windows which angle in toward the entrance. Above the display windows, there are green-painted blocks and below there are green wood panels.

The doorway to 109 and the center doorway are framed by cast iron pilasters; three are flat and fluted, and one is rounded. The capitals of the fluted pilasters are ornate and the rounded one is simpler. Above the doorway to 109 there is a glass panel with three vertical lights, which have green spindles between them. A limestone panel, not original, is beneath the display window.

111 has five bays, including an entrance and four display windows. A cast iron pilaster terminates the storefront on the east end. The upper portion of the display windows and entrance is divided into two, three, four, or five vertical lights, extending to a molded cornice. A green wood panel is below the display window. This storefront has just recently been rebuilt to resemble its original appearance.

The first and second stories are separated by the molded cornice, which extends across the entire facade. The second floor has eleven bays across the facade, aligned with those on the ground floor. These contain 13 double-hung sash windows with single lights; each bay contains one window except for the two bays on either side of the center bay, which contain paired windows. Two stone string courses run above and below the windows and form the window lintels and sills.

Separating the bays, 11 pilasters project about two inches from the facade and are one header and one stretcher brick wide. The pilasters begin from the cornice on the lower facade and reach the upper cornice blending into a wide bracket with dentils.

The upper facade displays several other decorative brick patterns. Courses of diagonally-laid brick are positioned below the window sills on the west half of the building, as well as above the window lintels, and below the upper cornice. The angled brick below the window is one course thick and the others are two courses thick. This angled brick runs between the pilasters and is not on the pilasters, themselves.

Vertical/horizontal brick squares are located between the two series of angled brick above the windows. Each square contains a series of three bricks laid horizontally, or three bricks laid vertically. They are laid four squares high and either two, three, four, or five squares wide, depending upon the width of the bay.

The building was repointed at some time using the wrong color mortar and the wrong profile. This was corrected in the past year.

The building has a galvanized metal, modillioned cornice consisting of a projecting molding with scroll-like brackets with dentils underneath. The frieze has a series of sunburst patterns in each bay. Above the cornice there are four finials, placed one at each end and two at the center about four feet apart.

There are three signs on the building; two are on display windows and one is flat against the facade. None are original signs. Around 1983, the facade was partially restored and the paint colors of the columns, panels, cornices, and other trim were researched and painted their original colors.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)	

Specific dates C. 1904 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Learner Building is a good local example of 19th century commercial architecture. In 1981, the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory evaluated it as a significant local example of Commercial Vernacular architecture. It is also significant as an early commercial structure, which was built at the time of Kokomo's transformation from an agricultural town to an industrial area due to the gas boom. The structure housed many businesses, which spanned this change and played a significant role in Kokomo's commerce.

The building is an excellent example of local masonry craftsmanship. The brick patterns present bold vertical lines enhanced by the limestone coursing, and accentuate the bay effect of the pilasters. The horizontal-vertical squares are very distinctive. The cornice, with its decorative frieze and brackets, is an excellent example of local tastes in commercial architecture of the early 1900's.

Located at the hub of Kokomo's commercial activity, the Learner Building has housed a variety of businesses which have significantly contributed to the city's commerce. One of the most important and long-term occupants was the Williams Brothers Grocery Store, which moved to the new building in 1904. The grocery was located at 111 E. Sycamore, which is the end storefront on the east side of the building. This was the main location of the store; the grocery also occupied a storefront in the Draper Block Building, which is across the alley on the Learner Building's east side.

The store was started in 1881 by William E. and John E. Williams, sons of a prominent Civil War veteran, John E. Williams. It was originally located on Main Street and in 1894 moved to a structure on the site of the present Learner Building. At the completion of the Learner Building around 1904, the grocery store moved into it. By this time, William had left the business and was replaced by another brother, Thomas, who left the business in 1923. John continued to operate the business at this same address until 1934, when he sold it to John S. Mitchell, of Windfall, who operated it as "Chew's Regal Store" until 1937 or 1938.

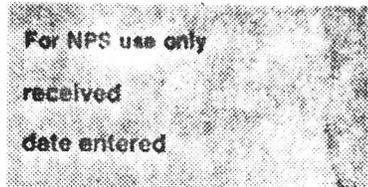
The Williams Grocery began when Kokomo was a small agricultural community of 4,000-6,000 people and existed during its change into an industrial area. It experienced a certain degree of success as indicated by its 53 years in business, which is probably the longest tenure of any Kokomo grocery store of its time. Changing with the times, the store purchased a chain driven horseless delivery wagon and, in 1928, the owners purchased three Ford Model "A" delivery trucks, which shows the importance of their delivery service to a large number of Kokomo's residents. The business survived the many economic crises in Kokomo, such as in 1893, 1907, 1925, and 1929 to 1930.

In 1907, the Karl W. Kern Jewelry Shop was located in the center storefront. The owner was a member of another pioneer family and a cousin of John Kern, U.S. Senator from Indiana, 1910 to 1916. The shop was located at this site for about 30 years, which indicates a certain amount of success and contribution to the Kokomo community.

Another major business was the Oliver Hotel, which, in 1907, occupied the second floor of both the Learner Building and the Draper Block, which is the building east of the Learner Building. Around 1930, the hotel split into two hotels; the one occupying the Learner

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Continuation sheet Learner Building Item number 8 Page 1

Building became known as the New Oliver Hotel. It remained in business until 1943 or 1944 and added to the level of activity in the area.

In more recent times, the Victory Cycle Company, located in the building since the late 1950's, is the most stable occupant of the last 30 years. Other businesses in the Learner Building have included restaurants, a record shop, doctors' offices, a savings and loan, and a dressmaker shop. The building is in excellent condition and continues its commercial activity.

Item Number 9

Kokomo City Directories, 1905, 1910-11, 1923.

Kokomo Daily Dispatch

1881 "New Grocery Store," August 11, 1881, Page 5, column 3.

Kokomo Historic Review Board

1981 Architectural Survey and Inventory of Kokomo, Indiana. Records on file at the Howard County Museum.

Kokomo Tribune, April 25, 1929, Page 1, column 8.

Morrow, Jackson

n.d. History of Howard County, Indiana. 2 Volumes. Indianapolis: B. F. Bowen Co.

Government Records

Transfer Records, 1845-present, Howard County Auditor's office.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Kokomo West

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	1	6
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5	7	3	6	9	0
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4	4	8	1	8	8	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 19 of the Original Plat of the City of Kokomo

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard A. Kastl, Director

organization Howard County Museum date July 20, 1983

street & number 1200 W. Sycamore telephone 317/452-4314

city or town Kokomo state Indiana 46901

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

title _____ date _____

For NPS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
_____ date _____

Keeper of the National Register _____

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration _____